

D. Eno River Corridor

4. LOWER ENO/LITTLE RIVER BOTTOMLANDS

SITE DESCRIPTION

County: Durham
Quad: Northeast Durham
Significance: Zoological: Regional (DURH 3)
Botanical: E-6, 4 - State; L-4, 4 - State
Landscape Function: Zoological: High (DURH 1); Botanical: No special merit
Boundary Integrity: High
Level of Threat: Zoological: Low; Botanical: E-6, 1 - Protected; L-4, 2 - Low
Protection Status: Medium
Community Viability: Zoological: High (DURH 3); Botanical: 2 - Good

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT FEATURES:

1. Extensive area of forested bottomlands and mesic slopes protected as property of the Corps of Engineers and leased as part of the Butner-Falls of the Neuse Gamelands by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Potentially a core refuge for several species requiring forest interior habitat or large tracts of undeveloped bottomlands.
2. An old growth forest with an unusual concentration of some of the rarest plants in the county, including two of state significance, two of regional significance and two disjuncts.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

Below Penny's Bend, the Eno remains a free-flowing river as far downstream as its confluence with the Flat River; beyond that point it becomes impounded by the Falls of the Neuse Reservoir. The bottomlands along this reach are quite broad, as is typical of sites within the Triassic Basin. Most of this area is covered in pine stands or second-growth hardwoods (extensive timbering took place just before the lake was created), and large areas have been impounded by beaver ponds, which has generally improved the area for wildlife. The slopes adjoining the bottomlands are also largely within the Corps boundaries and thus protected to some degree. Willie Duke's Bluff, the site of a massive outcrop of diabase, provides habitat for a number of rare plant species and forms the core of the Catsburg Natural Area. Most of the forest along the low slopes in this region is relatively nondescript second-growth, however, although if left undisturbed has the potential to develop into significant strips of mature mesic hardwoods. In